



December 2, 2003

**TO: The EQB General List, Local Officials, Property Owners and Persons interested in the Xcel Energy Lakefield Junction to Fox Lake 161 kV Transmission line Project**

**RE: Notice of Xcel Energy Filing of Route Permit Application with EQB**

Northern States Power Company, d/b/a Xcel Energy, proposes to construct a 161 kV transmission line and associated facilities connecting the Lakefield Junction Substation in Jackson County, Minnesota, and the Fox Lake Substation in Martin County, Minnesota (the Project). The Project is designed to increase outlet capability for the Buffalo Ridge area to allow for further development of wind energy in the region.

On November 25, 2003, Xcel Energy submitted an application (Application) to the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB) for a routing permit pursuant to the alternative permitting process contained in Minn. Rules parts 4400.2000 to 4400.2950, and Minn. Stat. § 116C.575.

Under the Power Plant Siting Act (Minnesota Statutes, Sections 116C.51-.69) a route permit from the EQB is required to build a large high voltage transmission line (HVTL). A HVTL is a conductor of electrical energy and associated facilities designed for and capable of operation at a nominal voltage of 100 kilovolts or more. The EQB has adopted rules for the administration of transmission line route permits (Minnesota Rules Chapter 4400). The EQB rules establish the requirements for submitting and processing a route permit application. The applicant must identify in the application their preferred route for the transmission line. As part of the permitting process, the EQB prepares an Environmental Assessment (EA) on the project and holds a public hearing. The EQB has up to six months from the time the application is accepted to complete the process and make a decision on the route permit.

Depending upon the final route, the new transmission line will be approximately 25.5 miles in length. A map showing the general area of Xcel Energy's proposed route is attached as Exhibit A. The route proposed by Xcel Energy is as follows:

The first segment is approximately 9 miles in length. The proposed route follows the existing 161 kV and 345 kV line corridors south from the Lakefield Junction Substation for 2 miles to Interstate 90. The line then tracks east along the north side of I-90 for about 5.6 miles, crossing I-90 just west of the I-90 rest stop and following the south side of I-90 for approximately 0.85 miles until it crosses the Des Moines River.

The second segment is approximately 3 miles in length. After reaching the east side of the river, the line parallels I-90 for a short distance until it approaches an old railroad grade approximately 1800 feet from the edge of the riverbank. The line then follows the railroad grade south/southeast through the City of Jackson to Highway 51. The line then follows a cross-country route for 1.3 miles turning north and following a cross-country route for 0.6 miles until it reaches the south side of I-90.

The third segment is approximately 13.5 miles in length. The transmission line parallels the south side of I-90 for approximately 9.7 miles and then crosses back over to the north side just west of 50<sup>th</sup> Avenue near Sherburn. The line follows the north side of I-90 for approximately 2.9 miles until it reaches 70<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Sherburn. At this point, the line leaves I-90 and follows 125<sup>th</sup> Street north for 0.9 miles until it reaches the Fox Lake Substation.

Where possible, Xcel Energy will negotiate with landowners for the purchase of all required right-of-way. There may be circumstances where Xcel Energy may be required to exercise the power of eminent domain to acquire property for the Project in accordance with its authority under state law.

The EQB will prepare an Environmental Assessment for the Project. As part of this process, the EQB will seek comments from the public and will hold a public meeting within 60 days of the EQB's acceptance of the Application. The meeting may also serve as the scoping meeting for the Project at which additional route alternatives may be proposed. The date of the first EQB public meeting and location is as follows:

**Monday, December 15, 2003**  
**3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.**  
**Best Western Country Manor Inn**  
**2007 Highway 71 North**  
**Jackson, MN**

The EQB will also hold a public hearing on the Application once the Environmental Assessment has been completed. The EQB is required to grant or deny the requested permit within six months from the date the EQB accepts the Application.

A certificate of need is required for this Project. The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission granted a certificate of need for this project on March 11, 2003.

The Chair designated EQB staff members Larry Hartman as project manager and George Johnson as the public advisor in this matter. Inquiries about this project should be directed to the EQB project manager, Larry Hartman (Tel: 651-296-5089 or [larry.hartman@state.mn.us](mailto:larry.hartman@state.mn.us)) or George Johnson (Tel: 651-296-2888 or [george.johnson@state.mn.us](mailto:george.johnson@state.mn.us)) Environmental Quality Board, 300 Centennial Bldg., 658 Cedar Street, St. Paul, MN 55155. Other contact information: Tel: 1-800-657-3794; Fax: 651-296-3698 or TTY: Minnesota Relay Service, 800-627-3694, and ask for the EQB. Project related materials are also available online at: [www.eqb.state.mn.us](http://www.eqb.state.mn.us). Any person may request to have his or her name or an organization's name placed on the project contact list by contacting Larry Hartman or George Johnson.

Current information about the Project and a copy of the Permit Application are available online at [www.xcelenergy.com](http://www.xcelenergy.com). Click on the "About Energy" button on the Home Page and then select "Transmission Projects". Copies of the Permit Application are also available at the Jackson County Library in Jackson and the Martin County Library in Fairmont, Minnesota. Project information may also be obtained by emailing [pamela.jo.rasmussen@xcelenergy.com](mailto:pamela.jo.rasmussen@xcelenergy.com) or writing to Pam Rasmussen at 1414 W. Hamilton Avenue, P.O. Box 8, Eau Claire, WI 54702-0008 or by calling Ms. Rasmussen at 1-800-238-7968.